

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16) today said that President Obama's Executive Order regarding detainees at Guantanamo Bay would still allow the Administration to hold civilian trials for terrorists like Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks.

"While I'm pleased that the President has reversed his previous position and will allow military commissions to resume at Guantanamo Bay, I'm deeply concerned that his Executive Order will leave the door open for the Administration to hold civilian trials for terrorists like Khalid Sheik Mohammed," Rooney said.

In a fact sheet released accompanying the Executive Order, the White House states (emphasis added), "With these and other reforms, military commissions, along with prosecutions of suspected terrorists in civilian courts, are an available and important tool in combating international terrorists that fall within their jurisdiction while upholding the rule of law."

"Giving foreign terrorists the same rights as American citizens is unacceptable," Rooney said. "Terrorists like KSM should be tried by military commission at Guantanamo Bay, and they must never step foot on American soil. Unfortunately, the President's Executive Order would leave open that possibility."

Rooney, a former military prosecutor in the JAG Corps and a former constitutional law professor at West Point, introduced the "Detainee Trials at Gitmo Act" in January to require that all detainees be tried by military commission at Guantanamo Bay.

"Military commissions are fair and provide due process for the accused, but they also protect critical intelligence officials and evidence," Rooney said. "As a former military prosecutor, I strongly believe that trying detainees in military tribunals at Guantanamo Bay is the best way to hold terrorists accountable, keep them out of the United States, and prevent them from rejoining the fight."

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